

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of demultiplexing a statistically multiplexed MPEG transport stream into a constant bit rate single program transport stream comprising the steps of:
separating a variable bit rate ~~single program transport stream composed of a sequence of pictures, each having a decode time stamp,~~ from the statistically multiplexed MPEG transport stream;

loading a picture from the variable bit rate ~~single program transport stream at the a rate that does not exceed a desired constant bit rate into a smoothing buffer at buffer, the loading commencing a specified time, or as soon thereafter as possible, prior to a decode time for the picture amount of time prior to the time indicated by the picture's decode time stamp;~~ and

transferring the picture from the smoothing buffer at the ~~decode time indicated by the picture's decode time stamp.~~

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of replacing B-type pictures at the input to the smoothing buffer with null B-type pictures when the smoothing buffer is in an overflow condition until the overflow condition ceases.

3. (New) A method as recited in claim 1 wherein, in the event a picture can not be loaded into the smoothing buffer the specified amount of time prior to the time indicated by the picture's decode time stamp, it is loaded into the smoothing buffer as soon as possible thereafter.

4. (New) A method of demultiplexing a multiplexed encoded video transport stream into a constant bit rate single program encoded transport stream comprising the steps of:

separating a variable bit rate program composed of a sequence of pictures, each picture having a decode time stamp, from the multiplexed encoded video transport stream, loading the

pictures into a smoothing buffer at a rate that does not exceed a desired constant bit rate and transferring the pictures from the smoothing buffer at the respective times indicated by the pictures' decode time stamps;

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if a picture of said sequence becomes available no later than a specified amount of time prior to said picture's decode time stamp, then said picture is loaded into the smoothing buffer commencing the specified amount of time prior to the time indicated by the picture's decode time stamp; and

if a picture of said sequence becomes available later than the specified amount of time prior to said picture's decode time stamp, then said picture is loaded into the smoothing buffer as soon as possible.